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long, 1 foot $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches broad, and 5 inches thick. At the top is a *, which I take to be intended to represent the sun : on each of the corners of the sloping and straight sides two small concentric circles ☉, which I take as intended to represent planets (Mars and Jupiter?) : and on the upper part of the slab the figure of Astarte with its crescent, holding a pomegranate in the right hand, from which a beast is feasting, and in the left a bunch of dates plucked at by a bird. Under this figure of Astarte, thus emblematic of the love-passion as alike furnishing fertility and prosperity to all living beings, is the entablature of a temple or house with rude Corinthian columns, and an eagle, while beneath is the figure of a man calmly standing, wrapped in a robe. Herodianus (*circa* 150 A.D.) tells us of the custom prevailing at the beatification of an emperor among the Romans. An eagle was bound on the funeral pyre so that when it was lighted and the bonds burned the living bird soared aloft bearing the soul of the deceased to the empyrean, and the Imperator became Divus. May not this well explain this figure standing in the porch of the house or temple ready to pass through the region presided over by Love into the vast beyond where Light and Order still prevail? and how far would such a faith differ from that held by the most of us to-day?

This stone, I believe, formed the doorway of a vault or sarcophagus such as may be not infrequently found on or near the shores of the Mediterranean, and may well aid us in our inquiries into the real beliefs of those who passed so long ago into the Great Beyond.

On each side of the head of the man's figure is a small hole such as would receive a tenon on a bronze plaque, which may have covered this figure, as we see brasses on the graves of Crusaders in old cathedrals. If this were so, this monument, had it contained the man's name, would have, like Horace's, proved "*Aere perennius*."

The Society was adjourned by the presiding officer.

Stated Meeting, May 5, 1899.

Vice-President SELLERS in the Chair.

Present, 21 members.

Gen. Isaac J. Wistar read an obituary notice of the late Richard A. Tilghman.

The Secretaries announced the death at Philadelphia, on May 2, of Alexander Biddle, aged 80 years.

The following papers were read :

By Mr. R. H. Mathews, of Parramatta, New South Wales,
"On Divisions of North Australian Tribes."

By Dr. Rudolph Buti, of Baltimore, "On an Interesting Fragment of the Book of the Dead."

By the Committee on Historical Manuscripts, "A Calendar of the Weedon and of the Richard Henry and Arthur Lee Correspondence in the Library of the Society."

Dr. Samuel G. Dixon was elected a Councillor to fill the unexpired term of Gen. Isaac J. Wistar, made vacant by his election as a Vice-President of the Society.

Mr. Harold Goodwin presented a framed engraving of John Vaughan, who had served the Society as Secretary in 1789 and 1790, as Treasurer from 1791 to 1841, and as Librarian from 1803 to 1842, and on motion the thanks of the Society were returned therefor.

The Society was adjourned by the presiding officer.

DIVISIONS OF NORTH AUSTRALIAN TRIBES.

BY R. H. MATHEWS, L.S.

(*Read May 5, 1899.*)

The division of a tribe into intermarrying sections or classes, although one of the most interesting of the institutions recognized among the Australian aborigines, has not hitherto received the attention which its importance deserves. In a former number of the PROCEEDINGS of this Society¹ I tabulated the names of eight sections, with the rules of marriage and descent in force over a large extent of country in the Northern Territory. Since then I have reported² a similar eight-section system, but with different sectional names, in the northwest corner of Queensland, extending southerly from the Gulf of Carpentaria for a distance of about three hundred miles, including the Wentworth, Nicholson, Gregory and Upper Georgina rivers.

In an article contributed to the Royal Society of New South Wales in June, 1898, I described the eight sections of the Arrinda tribe on the Finke, Todd and other rivers,³ but, while that paper

¹ PROC. AMER. PHILOS. SOC., xxxvii, 151-154.

² *Journ. Roy. Soc. N. S. Wales*, xxxii, 251, 252.

³ *Ibid.*, xxxii, 72.